

BURR OAK WOODS CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER is located one mile north of I-70 on Hwy 7, one mile west on Park Road. The Nature Center is open Monday through Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and noon to 5 p.m. on Sundays. AREA HOURS: The area and trails are open 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. No pets allowed. There is no admission fee. Gift Shop closes at 4:30 p.m. Phone: 816 - 228 - 3766

LEARN MORE ABOUT BURR OAK WOODS BY VISITING OUR WEBSITE AT:
WWW.BURROAKWOODS.ORG



The Nutshell
 BURR OAK WOODS CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER
 MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
 1401 NW PARK ROAD - BLUE SPRINGS, MO 64015



Restoration Project Day Saturday, March 15 8:00 a.m. - Noon

It's that time of the year for our annual clean up and on-going efforts to improve the habitats of Burr Oak Woods. Bring your family and friends, and join Burr Oak Woods staff and volunteers as we continue our efforts to enhance native plant and animal communities. This is a great community project for Scout, church, and other civic organizations. After all of our hard work, we'll come inside the nature center to warm up and enjoy a warm lunch and camaraderie. You'll be able to come back for seasons to come and see the effects of your hard work. Call to make reservations for you or your group. Please be sure to dress for the weather and for getting dirty, too! Ages: 8 and up.

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The Nutshell

March 2003
 Volume 17
 Number 3

Newsletter of Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center

From Raptors and Weather to Waterfowl and Laughter

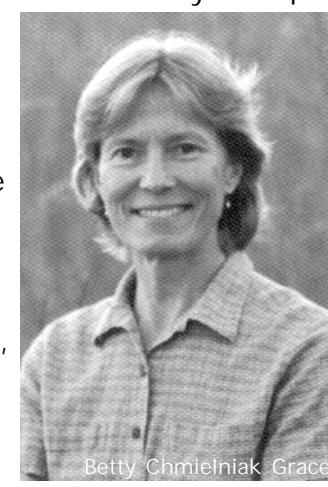
Welcome to March madness, no not basketball, but to a month of exciting programs featuring a host of guest speakers! We'll kick off this month of special events on Saturday, March 8, from 10:00



Brian Busby

a.m. to 11:30 a.m. with KMBC Channel 9 Chief Meteorologist Bryan Busby. He will share his weather wisdom with us, ranging from how lightning occurs to the fascinating and frightening facts of tornadoes.

On Sunday, March 9, Burr Oak Woods will host a special presentation and book signing by cartoonist and author Betty Chmielniak Grace. You'll recognize many of Betty's cartoons from their appearance in the *Missouri Conservationist*. She has now assembled them into a new book, *Outside Jokes*:



Betty Chmielniak Grace

Cartoons about nature and the outdoors. Join her from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Burr Oak Woods, enjoy her insights into the natural world and pick up your own copy of her book from the gift shop.



Andrea Zenone

Lakeside Nature Center's Andrea Zenone will join us on Sunday, March 16 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. for a look into the fascinating world of raptors. You'll even get to meet several live birds of prey up close and personal and learn about the work done by the staff and volunteers at Lakeside.

If waterfowl is your bag, then you'll not want to miss our guests, MDC Wildlife Management Biologist Roger Wombwell and Senior Conservation Agent John Thomas, for an evening presentation on the identification and

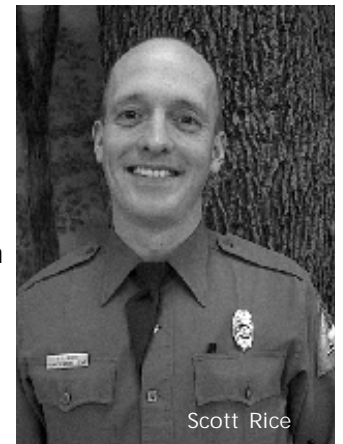
biology of waterfowl. Join us Tuesday evening March 18 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. for this look into ducks and geese, and the importance of wise wetland management to the continued success of these birds.

Finally, MDC Conservation Agent Scott Rice will join the children at our Conservation Kid's Club meeting on Monday, March 24. He'll share his expertise and experiences about conservation agents including the important work they do to enforce the laws that



protect our natural resources for all of us.

Add in all our naturalist programs and you can see that we have a host of opportunities to learn about our fish, forests and wildlife. We hope you'll make plans to join us for one or more of these programs during our version of March Madness!



Scott Rice

Our mission is to bring people and nature together.

MARCH EVENTS *at Burr Oak Woods*

Call Burr Oak Woods Nature Center on or after March 1 to register for free programs. (Phone 228-3766). If you have to cancel, please call as soon as possible so someone on the waiting list can attend.

Birding 101

Birding 101 participants will begin the month with a field trip to Smithville Lake and Lake Jacomo in search of waterfowl and other water birds. Our indoor sessions will focus on hawks and owls on the 11th and shorebirds, gulls and terns on the 25th. We'll end the month with a walk at Burr Oak Woods in search of early spring migrants. Specific dates and times are listed. Please call to register.

Saturday, March 1: Field Trip
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 11:
Hawks, Owls & Relatives,
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 22: Field Trip
9:00 a.m. - Noon

Tuesday, March 25:
Shorebirds & relatives,
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

8 *Saturday*

The Eye of the Storm with Bryan Busby

Let's explore Kansas City storms with KMBC Channel 9 Chief Meteorologist Bryan Busby! Do you love to watch thunderheads building on the horizon? What causes lightning? Why is the Midwest considered to be "tornado alley"? What should you do if you spot a tornado? How do you become a meteorologist? Seating is limited. Early registration is suggested.

Time: 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.
Ages: All Ages Welcome

8 *Saturday*

It's Maple Sugaring Time!

That's right! Burr Oak Woods is making syrup! We will teach you how to tap a tree and turn its sap into mouth watering syrup. You don't want to miss this one. Dress for the weather. Please call to register.

Time: 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Ages: Families (Ages 7 & up)

9 *Sunday*

Meet the Artist & Book Signing with Betty Chmielniak Grace

Here's a chance to take a different, and comical, look at the world of conservationist through the eyes of cartoonist Betty Chmielniak Grace. She will share her unique insights into the natural world as expressed through her art. Please call to register.

Time: 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.
Ages: All Ages Welcome

9 *Sunday*

Dr. Nutcase is in the House!

A Storm's a Brewin' Have you ever wondered how one day it can be sunny and beautiful while the next day is attacked by a violent thunderstorm? Join Dr. Nutcase as we figure out how thunderstorms are made and its affect on the plants and wildlife around us. Please call to register.

Time: 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Ages: 7 & up

14 *Fridays*

28 Morning Bird Walks

As spring arrives so do many of our favorite birds. Join Naturalist Stephanie Acers as we search for some early spring arrivals and some late winter ones too. No registration is required.

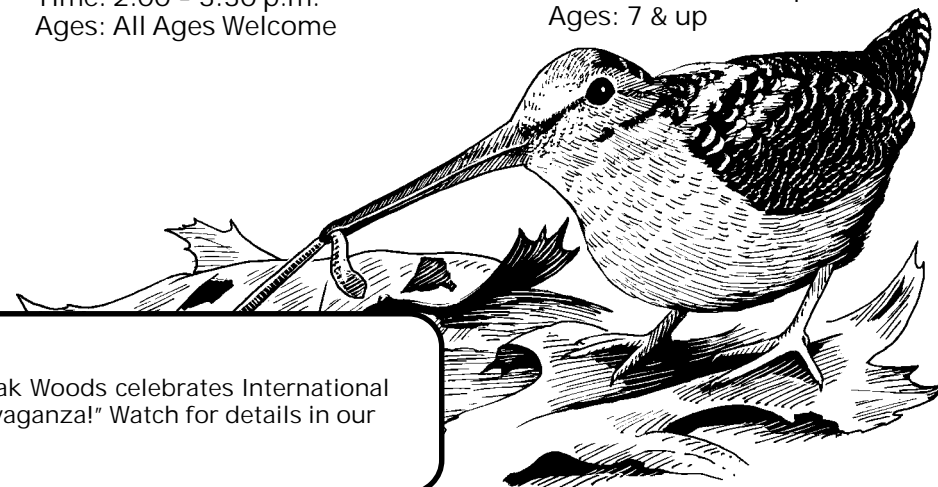
Time: 8:00 - 9:30 a.m.
Ages: All Ages Welcome

14 *Thursday*

Homeschool: Who Goes There?

Ever wonder who is really out there in the woods and fields? Join us for a lesson on learning how to tell who's been where and what they might have been doing. Learn about tracks and other traces of animal activity. Be sure to dress for the weather and please call to register.

Time: 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. or
1:00 - 2:00 p.m.
Ages: 7 & up



7 *Fridays*

21 Morning Bird Walks

As spring arrives so do many of our favorite birds. Join Naturalist Stephanie Acers as we search for some early spring arrivals and some late winter ones too. No registration is required.

Time: 8:00 - 9:30 a.m.
Ages: Adults (Ages 20 & up)

Mark your calendars!

Saturday, May 10 at 9 a.m.-2 p.m. as Burr Oak Woods celebrates International Migratory Bird Day with our own "Avian Extravaganza!" Watch for details in our April edition of *The Nutshell*.

BE SURE TO CHECK THE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE PROGRAMS!

more! MARCH EVENTS

14 *Thursday*

Homeschool: Squirrel, Squirrels, Squirrels!!!

This time of year it seems like we see squirrels everywhere. This month we will learn about squirrels and their crazy antics. We will be making a cool squirrel craft to take home too. Please call to register.

Time: 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. or
1:00 - 2:00 p.m.
Ages: 3 - 6

15 *Saturday*

Restoration Project Day

Bring your family and friends, and join Burr Oak staff and volunteers as we continue our efforts to enhance native plant and animal communities. After all of our hard work, we'll come inside the nature center to warm up and enjoy a warm lunch and camaraderie. Call to make reservations for you or your group.

Time: 8:00 - NOON
Ages: Families (Ages 8 & up)

16 *Sunday*

From Beaks to Talons Live Raptor Program

Help us welcome naturalist, Andrea Zenone, from Lakeside Nature Center. She will take us on a journey into the world of three very intriguing birds. Which will you like better, the regal birds of prey or the ghastly scavenger? Seating is limited. Early registration is suggested.

Time: 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.
Ages: Families

16 *Sunday*

Burr Oak Woods Hiking Club

Join volunteer naturalists Melissa Schudel and Marvin Roberts as they head off to conquer Monkey Mountain! Call the nature center for directions. Please call to register.

Time: 1:00 - 3:30 p.m.
Ages: Adults (20 & up)

16 *Sunday*

Nature's Sketch Book

Being out in the field and sketching our natural world is the perfect way to study nature. Please bring sketchbook and creative spirit! Please call to register.

Time: 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.
Ages: Adults (20 & up)

18 *Tuesday*

Waterfowl I.D. Workshop

Join us at 6:30 p.m. for a look into ducks and geese identification with Missouri Department of Conservation bird experts! Please call to register.

Time: 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Ages: All Ages Welcome

21 *Friday*

Dancin' with the Woodcocks

It's an annual rite of spring that plays out each evening at dusk. It begins with a nasal-sounding "peent" and ends with an aerial display that rivals any in the natural world. Join IPS Craig Hensley for an evening of fun as we head out in search of the timberdoodle or American woodcock. Please call to register.

Time: 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
Ages: Adults (20 and up)

22 *Saturday*

Nature Journaling

Come join Naturalist Stephanie Acers as we learn about nature journaling. We will be making nature journals and then taking a walk on one of the trails to try it our selves. Bring your writing medium of choice. Please call to register.

Time: 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.
Ages: All Ages

22 *Saturday*

Beautiful Bluebirds

Symbols of one of nature's great comebacks, eastern bluebirds nest throughout Missouri, thanks to the efforts of many individuals. Join us for a look into the world of this beautiful songbird followed by a walk to check out nesting bluebirds at Burr Oak Woods. Please call to register.

Time: 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.
Ages: Adults (20 and up)

24 *Monday*

Conservation Kid's Club: So You Want to be a Conservation Agent?

Job Opportunity: Honorary Junior Conservation Agent
Location: Burr Oak Woods CNC
Who may apply: Kid's Club Members
How to apply: Call the Nature Center; Registration required

Duties and Responsibilities:

- training and job duties of a conservation officer
 - become part of a mock violation investigation
 - practice essential physical endeavors
- Not a Kid's Club member? Call for more information.*

Time: 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Ages: 7 - 10

25 *Tuesday*

26 *Wednesday*

29 *Saturday (morning only)*

Little Acorns:

Squirrel, Squirrels, Squirrels!!!

This time of year it seems like we see squirrels everywhere. This month we will learn about squirrels and their crazy antics. We will be making a cool squirrel craft to take home too. Please call to register.

Times: 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.
or 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.
Ages: 3 - 6

29 *Saturday*

Outdoor Adventurers: Surviving Your Adventures

You are packed and ready to go camping with your friends and you ask yourself... "Am I forgetting anything?" Chances are that you probably are! Come join us and learn how to pack a "survival kit"! Please call to register.

Time: 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.
Ages: 11 - 13



Greenbrier



From the Treetops

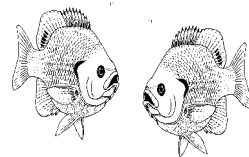
These are very unusual times we're living in right now, filled with uncertainty, uneasiness, for many, even fear. It's easy to become filled with apathy and a sense of uncaring for tomorrow. This month, we're working together with staff, volunteers, friends, and family on the Oak Barren project. Many of you have already put countless hours on this project area west of the nature center; others have walked by on the Missouri Tree Trail and witnessed the project in progress.

Last year's ice storm brought down a lot of trees and limbs, and they're still scattered throughout the project area. We're going to concentrate on cleaning it up to expose the forest floor for seed regeneration. Afterward, we'll sit down to a hot cooked potluck lunch provided by the staff and volunteers.

If you've been missing a sense of community, a sense of place, or a reason for tomorrow, join us on March 15, from 8:00am – noon. I promise, you won't soon forget this day!

Happy Trails,

— LYNN YOUNGBLOOD
Nature Center Manager



Fish, Film, & Feedings

The fish, turtles, and amphibians are fed Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday at 3 p.m. The snakes are fed every other Friday at 3:30 p.m.

Films are shown Saturday and Sunday at 1:30 p.m.

March 1st & 30th
Backyard Birds

March 2nd & 22nd
Birding for Beginners

March 8th & 23rd
How Seeds get Here and There?

March 15th & 29th
Blooming Secrets

BURR OAK WOODS Conservation Nature Center

1401 NW Park Road
Blue Springs, Missouri 64015
PHONE 816-228-3766
FAX 655-2627

NATURE CENTER MANAGER
LYNN YOUNGBLOOD

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS SUPERVISOR
R. CRAIG HENSLEY

NATURALISTS
STEPHANIE ACERS
LISA LaCOMBE
SHERI MEDLOCK
DIANE NEAL
ANNA-LISA TUCKER

CLERICAL
JUDY BOLLMANN
JOAN BLACKMON
LAUREN MCCARTHY
PAULETTE OZIAS

MAINTENANCE
WAYNE BASS
DAVID BILYEU
RACHEL BUTLER
BRADY JEFFERS
ROBERT MAUPINS

NEWSLETTER LAYOUT/DESIGN
SHERI MEDLOCK

~ Naturalist Notebook ~

How Sweet it is!

by Anna-Lisa Tucker

One frosty winter morning, I stood busily in my kitchen making pancakes for my husband and daughter. They were both still asleep, and I wanted to surprise them with a breakfast that would more than satisfy their appetites. As I began to set the table, I smelled the sweet aroma of maple syrup warming in the microwave. While waiting with anticipation, I started to wonder how this fantastic creation was made. Little did I know that this small interest of mine would forever change the way I looked at trees.

The art of making maple syrup has been documented as far back as the early 1600's. Native Americans were the first to discover this sweet sensation. They found that if they bored a hole through the bark of maple trees in the late winter, a watery substance, or sap, would flow from it. If they took this sap and boiled it down, it would produce a sweet sugar and syrup. This almost sounded too good to be true! I had to find out more.

Plants have a fantastic ability to produce their own food through a process known as photosynthesis. In this process, sugar is the main food produced, as well as the main ingredient in syrup! It begins with water in the soil being pulled into the tree by its roots. This water is then carried up the tree to its leaves where photosynthesis takes place. Inside each leaf are millions of chloroplasts. These

chloroplasts gather energy from the sun which then binds together oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon, thus making sugar! Although this process may sound simple, it is much more complex.

In the fall, when the growing season comes to an end, trees and plants

store this sugar in the form of starch in their roots. In late winter and early spring when the temperatures are just right (below 32 degrees at night and above 40 degrees in the day) the sap begins to flow back up to the leaves to provide nourishment for the new growing season. This also proves to be the best time to tap the trees to make syrup. Sugar maples are the best trees to tap, because their sap contains the highest amount of sugar, roughly 2-3% sugar and 97-98% water. Other trees, such as boxelders, red maples, silver maples, basswood, and black walnut can also be tapped to make syrup, but more sap is needed!

It's fascinating to know that people are not the only ones to benefit from this tasty treat. Yellow-bellied sapsuckers can be seen throughout most of Missouri drinking the sugary sap before migrating north to their breeding grounds. Honeybees, rabbits, and squirrels also will benefit from a broken branch that drips sap to the ground.

Who would have guessed that frosty morning in my kitchen would greatly change my perception of so many trees. Now as I hike the trails at Burr Oak Woods, I no longer just look at these magnificent pillars as a habitat for wildlife, but I look at the trees as a sweet resource we've only begun to understand. Join us March 8th as we try our hand at making maple syrup. It's sure to sweeten your day!



Critter Corner

Zebra swallowtail

by Diane Neal, Naturalist

Did you know that we have zebras in Missouri? No, I don't mean in the zoo... We have *wild* zebras! Zebra swallowtail butterflies that is! You will begin seeing these beautiful butterflies flying through Missouri woods starting in March. They are called swallowtails because the long "tails" extending from the back wings reminded people of barn swallows. You can learn how to attract these beautiful insects to your backyard by picking up a FREE brochure next time your at Burr Oak Woods Nature Center. Ask for "Butterfly Gardening and Conservation" at the front desk. Happy Butterfly Watching!



- NATURAL HAPPENINGS -

- Redbuds, gooseberry, and serviceberries are beginning to bloom. Look for the flowers of these delicious wild edibles!
- Listen for "peenting" sounds of the American woodcocks at dusk as they begin their courtship rituals.
- It is time to set up and clean out bluebird nest boxes. Put up your purple martin house, too!
- Bats are now leaving their hibernation caves or "house" in late March.

Burr Oak Woods' Staff Profile Robert Maupins



What do you like about working here?
Task changed daily and the freedom.

How long have you been with the Missouri Department of Conservation?
14 years

Hobbies:
British style cars

Family:
Married to Saunsira for 15 years, one daughter, Saunchel, 8 years old.

Other points of interests:
I am building a SCCA Road Racer, interest in racing. Robert can be seen around the Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area during the weekdays. Be sure to drop him a wave!